conception* Why did it fail so disastrously ? In the main, if not entirely, because in the working out of the plan, surprise, which was the essential condition of its success, totally disappeared. Whose fault was that ? It is invidious to distribute blame, and it would be difficult in this case to distribute it fairly. But of this I have no doubt : the fault lies with both parties—French as well as British, British as well as French, but for reasons which will appear in the narrative the failure to conceal the plan from the enemy was attributable to French carelessness. There were two elements in the surprise : one was a change in the terrain of the general attack. The Germans were expecting a renewal of the attack of the Somme plateau mainly from the British Army. That was the Chantilly scheme and the Germans saw the usual preparations made in that area for a great offensive.

Nivelle's mass of manoeuvre was intended for an attack in a totally different area, where the Germans did not anticipate any assault on their line. The part to be played by the British was that of a " holding " attack. Thus the enemy would be taken unawares, and would have* their reserves distributed on a wide front, whilst the point at which the real onslaught was to be made would be without any reserves.

Ludendorff's testimony ^he new sector chosen by Nivelle for his main assault was peculiarly adapted *to Nivelle's* to preparation without being

observed.
choice of front Thig is admitted by Ludendorff :—

" Thanks to their ample labour supply, the Entente had been in a position to furnish, not only the Verdun sector, but also a large portion of their front with all the means of communication and munitions necessary for an attack. It was, therefore,